

ZERO BEAT

HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION, INC

1 QSL BUREAU

SPRINGFIELD, MASS

ARRL AFFILIATED, 34th YEAR

NEXT MEETING

Oct. 1, 1982 Feeding Hills Congregational Church 8:00pm

Jay Rusgrove of Advanced Receiver Research will be on hand to present topics concerning UHF & VHF construction techniques. His background and involvement in state of the art electronics should serve as solid base in a discussion of an area of electronics where an extra quarter of inch of lead length can spell the difference between success and failure.

1982-1983 Meeting Schedule

Date	Topic and Speaker	Chairman
Nov. 5	Annual Auction	Dick, N8BQU
Dec. 10	Christmas Party	Ron, WB1ETS & Steve, WA1EYF
Jan. 8	VHF Potpourri, Frank Potts, WA1RWU Arecibo Observatory, John Balboni, AC1T	John, AC1T
Feb. 5	VHF Sweepstakes Linear Amp Design, Steve Politian, K1FO	John, AC1T & Malcom, WB1CLO
Mar. 5	Satellite Receiving, Yorke Phillips, K1BXE	Jeff, K1BE
Apr. 2	ATV, Carl Prarie, N1AHW	Jeff, K1BE
May 7	Annual Flea Market	Gent, WA1CQF
June	Banquet Field Day	Malcolm, WB1CLO & Steve, WA1EYF

W. MASS. SCM NEWSLETTER



de W1JP

MUSINGS FROM THE SCM

Here it is the middle of August! I sit at my desk writing a newsletter to the amateurs in Western Mass., not being entirely sure how to distribute it. The ARRL allows me one mailing annually to all members in the section. That could not only turn out to be expensive, but extremely time-consuming in terms of addressing and licking stamps. The thought of distributing via local club newsletters is attractive to me but may place an unfair burden on others. We'll see how it works out.

Let me introduce myself. I am William (Bill) Hall, and my address and telephone number can be found on p. 8 of every issue of QST. I was first licensed in 1958 as KNØPGA, upgrading to KØPGA shortly after. I moved to New England and became K1RPB in 1961. In 1963, I earned my Extra Class license. In December, 1976, I had the option of taking a 2-letter call and became W1JP. A good deal of my early amateur interests consisted of building and testing gear.

How do I view my job as SCM? You folks elected me for a 2-year term starting January 1, 1982. In January, '83, I will be offered the option of staying on as SCM or becoming SM in the new Field Organization. I believe I will choose the latter, because the scope fits better. My job as I see it now is to manage the communications affairs for Western Mass. I have a very capable SEC and SCM who take care of the ARES and NTS, respectively. The Section Club Coordinator does an excellent job keeping me abreast of the happenings in the section. I make appointments, issue certificates and awards, keep records, and write a monthly report for QST. Overall, I spend 3-4 hours a week on the administrative details for which the SCM is responsible. One last item that may be of importance to you. Several times a year, I meet with John Sullivan W1HHR, who is New England Director, ARRL. I represent you, members from the Western Mass. Section, and I appreciate any of your comments forwarded to me in writing.

HAM INFO

Quite frequently, I receive packages of information from the League pertaining to a broad range of amateur subject matter. For instance, there are summaries of pending FCC rules, changes, and proposals, League position papers (like opposition to codeless licenses), latest call signs issued, club bulletins, minutes of directors' meetings, public information bulletins, and even the ARRL Annual Report. If you would like a copy of any of these, please send me an appropriate SASE.

SIMULATED EMERGENCY TEST (SET)

"It is essential to the security of the United States to have telecommunications facilities adequate to satisfy the needs of the nation during and after any national emergency", says Presidential Directive NR53. That's where we come in folks! During the weekend, October 16-17, we will get an opportunity to demonstrate our ability to provide this service and to prove it to the "National Communications System HQ" established by the government.

The SET net schedule is set forth below. We would like to see as much activity as possible, so check into one of your local repeaters at the scheduled times and send a message to Aunt Tillie in Oskosh or solicit traffic from your neighbor. It's terrific PR for the neighborhood. Several NTS and ARES nets will also be active. Use emergency power if possible.

Sometime on Sunday, an interesting scenario will develop. A very severe thunderstorm will hit the area early in the morning. A few hours later, reports of widespread illness are flashed on TV nationwide. Phone lines become jammed. Relief operators are unavailable because they are too weak to travel. Electric service becomes sporadic. A few deaths occur. An airplane is missing. A great mysterious web is woven. Can the hams help? You bet! Follows now the SET net schedule I obtained from SEC WBLHIH.

SET NET SKEDS (Saturday and Sunday, Local Time)

<u>Time</u>	<u>NET</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
0830*	WMEN	Section	PHone	3937 KHz
0900*	WMEN	Local	2M FM	Local Repeater
1000	WMFN	Section	Phone	3935
1100		Local	2M FM	Local Repeater
1200	WMEN	Section	Phone	3937
1300	WMFN	Section	Phone	3935
1400		Local	2M FM	Local Repeater
1600	WMFN	Section	Phone	3935
1700		Local	2M FM	Local Repeater
1800	WMEN	Section	PHone	3937
1900	WMN	Section	CW	3562
2000		Local	2M FM	Local Repeater
2200	WMN	Section	CW	3562

* Sunday only.

If you would rather not get involved, so be it. At least, do a little eavesdropping, it should prove mysterious and interesting on Sunday.

ARPS SC LEADERSHIP ROSTER

The Amaterur Radio Public Service Corps (ARPS SC) consists of the National Traffic System (NTS) and Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). Listed below are the names and calls of the leaders in each group.

Section Communications Manager Bill Hall W1JP Brimfield

NTS

Section Traffic Manager Bill Voedisch W1UD Leominster

Net Manager, W. Mass. Fone Net Art Zavarella W1KK Agawam

Net Manager, W. Mass. (CW) Net Don Haney K1LT Harvard

ARES

Section Emergency Coordinator	Dick Goodman WBLHIH Williamstown
District Emerg. Coord., Worcester Co.	Bob Armstrong WJTL Fitchburg
Emerg. Coord., N. Worcester Co.	Tom Duffy KJHC Leominster
Emerg. Coord., S. Worcester Co.	Vacant
Emerg. Coord., Berkshire Co.	Ed Prezenik WBLDBN Pittsfield
Emerg. Coord., Franklin Co.	Dick Cunningham WBLHKN Erving
Emerg. Coord., Hampshire Co.	Dave Schwartz WLGJ Amherst
Emerg. Coord., Hampden Co.	Vacant
Net Manager W. Mass. Emerg. Net	Vacant

CLUBS

Affiliated Club Coordinator	Al Purseglove WLYI Hadley
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The above are not empty titles. Each position held is actively pursued by the above, with commitments which range from once per week to 7 days a week of participation. My hat's off to all, and my regret is only that three positions suddenly became vacant at this time of writing.

N.E. DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

I received a copy of the ARRL Annual Report this past summer. Within it is John Sullivan's comments to the Board of Directors. I thought I'd pass them on to you.

The Board of Directors
The American Radio Relay League

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to submit my seventh report to the membership. I have been privileged to represent the amateurs of New England on the Board for this period of time.

This report should reflect the concerns of the membership and not facts that show how many hamfests or conventions have been held in the Division. I feel that this report should bring out the concerns and attitudes expressed to me in letters, telephone calls and meetings.

With WARC having been wound down, there is not one single cause to unite the amateurs. True, we know of many problems that are very important to the amateur community, however

each amateur doesn't feel threatened with a loss as they did in the battle for frequencies.

If an amateur is not having antenna or tower difficulties, he does not give much attention to this problem. This is about the way each feels about problems that do not presently threaten him. And so for most, membership in the American Radio Relay League is a subscription to *QST*. Even then it is compared to other publications on the same subject, without a thought that *QST* is a journal of the activities of the League.

Many an amateur reads *QST* at the library or borrows it from a friend and does not lend any support to our cause. The burden falls on the shoulders of our loyal members. We must look to ways to make belonging to the League a more visible benefit than just *QST*. We must also en-



courage the membership to take a more active part in running the ARRL.

If an amateur can receive some service that he or she desires without providing support to the organization, why join? However if membership is required to receive this desired service, then I am quite sure that the support will be forthcoming. The League should extend a welcoming hand to the non-member and encourage him or her to

join us. It seems that I am asked the question, "Do I really have to be a member to receive a DXCC Award?" This query is put to me at nearly every club meeting that I have attended. There are those amateurs that want but do not want to give.

If the League curtails their ability to obtain such services, they will have two choices, continue as they are presently doing or be a member.

The second challenge that we face is showing the member that he or she are active partners in running the League and not just another number on the QST label.

During the latter part of 1981, I have been discussing with clubs the "New Look" that may be coming. It seems the membership is waiting to see this change in the field organization and the club structure. If we as Directors implement the suggestions of the Long

Range Planning Committee, we will be on the path of giving the League "back to the members". It must be done with sincerity and not by going through the motions. If there is a realization that their voice is being heard and that they are being given the opportunity to help make decisions, we will be well on the way to a stronger A.R.R.L.

Right now, ARRL Headquarters in Newington is a somewhat vague and remote location where the Board of Directors meet, make motions and raise the dues. I am sure that if many of these members are brought into the picture with greater detail, we will have a membership that understands that all of the problems that face the Board do not have simple solutions. There will be concern and not apathy.

For us to accomplish this task, we as Directors should look as far down the road as possible in our planning. Each of us should present our motions to the Board Members as early as possible as they can be given the con-

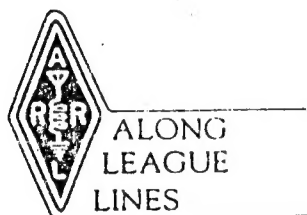
sideration they deserve. If we, the Directors, do this as early in the game as possible, the membership will have an opportunity to consider and comment on these actions. This will surely give them the knowledge that we are sharing our task with them. Perhaps they will realize the solutions are not always the way they would want it to be but the way it must be.

To sum up this report, membership in the League must be made more meaningful, in benefits received and responsibilities shared.

Respectfully submitted,

John C. Sullivan

John C. Sullivan, W1HHR
Director, New England Division
Columbia, Connecticut



Don't buy a Subaru, if you intend to install "CB's, HAM's, (sic) Garage door openers, etc." That's the advice of C. Lynn Swinney, Customer Relations Manager of Subaru Atlantic, Inc., Columbia, MD. If the other importers would only follow suit and make similar recommendations about their products, we are sure Detroit would breathe a sigh of relief. Car sales of domestic models would zoom.

Before we too hastily applaud Mr. Swinney for such noble candor, we should point out he actually recommended that Albert Jacobs not install any of the above named devices in his new Subaru. This was, unfortunately, several weeks after Mr. Jacobs had closed the deal and paid for the car.

When Mr. Jacobs was dickering with the salesman, he had asked about installing a radio transmitter in a Subaru. No problem! When the car was delivered, the owner's manual carried a warning about such installations and suggested contacting the dealer, who could explain the necessary precautions. You guessed it; the dealer knew nothing about it when Mr. Jacobs contacted him.

Finally, the dealer gave Mr. Jacobs the number of the regional service manager. Presumably, if Subaru hadn't informed the dealer, at least the regional service representative would know about the situation. Oddly enough, the regional service representative didn't seem to know any more about this potential problem than the others. He suggested Mr. Jacobs contact the importer and to that end gave him the phone number. Mr. Jacobs called and spoke with people in the importer's office. Finally one of them told him there "probably wouldn't be any trouble" hooking a transmitter to the same place the broadcast radio connects to the power lines. Mr. Jacobs asked for a letter to that effect. The person became indignant and said he "wouldn't stick his neck in the noose."

Besides deceptive sales practices and shoddy customer relations, Subaru is guilty of another sin — sloppy engineering. Electronics, particularly microcomputers, have invaded most areas of modern existence at the same time that radio transmitting devices have proliferated. Subaru is not alone in putting electronics into cars to control the engine, but their attitude is singular. It is foolish and unrealistic to assume these devices will not be subject to intense radio frequency fields.

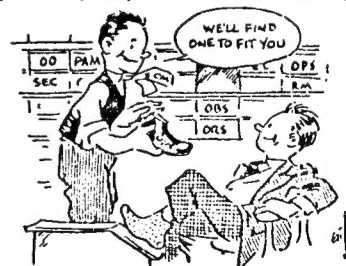
One foreign manufacturer recently introduced a model with electronic fuel injection. Unfortunately, the design was deficient. Radio waves of strong enough potential, whether internally or externally generated, destroyed the control module. Many owners had their engine fail in the middle of the expressway when a passing driver activated his mobile transmitter. The engines didn't start again until the fuel injection modules were replaced. The manufacturer quickly found a cure, retrofitted the cars already sold and modified the production procedures to include the protective devices. Similar stories can be told about other manufacturers and speed controls, electronic brake controls, climate controls and dome lights. Cures performed at the production line are cheap and easy; ones done in the field are not.

Contrary to the assertion in Mr. Swinney's letter, it doesn't matter whether the radio waves are generated inside or outside the automobile. Radio waves are radio waves. If a device is susceptible to one, it will be susceptible to the other. You know the old gag about being a little bit pregnant.

A responsible manufacturer will strive to correct a deficient design, not to stonewall his dissatisfied customer. The growth of transmitting devices is not limited to Amateur Radio and Citizen's Band — there are police, ambulances, fire fighters, mobile telephones, business band, garage door openers and radios ad infinitum. Perhaps Subaru might want to consider improving their electronic circuits — or, at least, expanding the list of people who shouldn't buy their products.

STATION APPOINTMENTS

ARRL's field organization has a place for every active amateur who has a station. The Communications Department organization exists to increase individual enjoyment and station effectiveness in amateur radio work, and we extend a cordial invitation to every amateur to participate fully in the activities, to report results monthly, and to apply to the SCM for one of the following station appointments. ARRL membership and the conditional class or higher license or VE equivalent is prerequisite to all appointments, except where otherwise indicated.



FROM RUMOR CONTROL

Soon to be released will be the totally new I-CAME 750 HF transceiver. It will be a kilowatt mobile transceiver featuring a pair of 813's in the final and guaranteed to fit in the back seat of any import automobile. Also it is currently being certified by the Coast Guard for use in marine service as standby equipment in the event that a vessel's primary anchor become inoperative.

QRM Magazine is presently running the rig through its paces and will be featuring it in its product review in the near future. However, publication will be delayed approximately two weeks since the technical editor is recuperating with a hernia. (Something about moving a rig from the car to the lab)

Some of the rig's features are a push to talk microphone which has a built in spring in the push to talk switch which will overpower your thumb after 60 minutes to allow for a transmission from the party you're in qso with. Also included is a built in "uhh" and "hello test" generator which will help you in loading up. Other nifties are a built in dummy load which also serves as the antenna when mobile. Options are a 100hp diesel engine to charge the batteries and helper springs for the transporting vehicle's rear suspension. life-time theft insurance is included at no extra cost.

REPLACEMENT PARTS

With the increasing use of imported equipment, we are encumbered with the problem of replacement parts when the Super Band Blaster bites the dust with a cloud of smoke. Many manufacturers have stateside service centers which will sell you repair parts at nominal cost. But, what happens when you need an IC chip for a piece of gear which isn't backed by a service organization. The major semiconductor manufacturers carry extensive cross reference information at supply houses. Of course, the chip you're looking for won't be listed by Motorola, GE, RCA, Sylvania or anybody else.

However, there is one more possibility....an outfit named Fuji-Seva Inc. They carry many import type transistors, IC's, and other devices. With no minimum order requirements and toll free WATS service, they are certainly worth a try for that elusive part.

Contact: Fuji-Seva Inc.
PO Box 40325
Cincinnati, Ohio 45240
800-421-2841

STATION REFERENCE SHEET

ARRL NUMBERED RADIOGRAMS

The letters ARL are inserted in the preamble in the check and in the text before spelled out numbers, which represent texts from this list. Note that some ARL texts include insertion of numerals. Example: NR 1 R WIAW ARL 5 NEWINGTON CONN DEC. 25 DONALD R SMITH AA 164 EAST SIXTH AVE AA NORTH RIVER CITY MO AA PHONE 733 3968 BT ARL FIFTY ARL SIXTY ONE BT DIANA AR. For additional information about traffic handling, consult *Operating an Amateur Radio Station*, published by ARRL.

Group One -- For Possible "Relief Emergency" Use

- ONE** Everyone safe here. Please don't worry.
TWO Coming home as soon as possible.
THREE Am in _____ hospital. Receiving excellent care and recovering fine.
FOUR Only slight property damage here. Do not be concerned about disaster reports.
FIVE Am moving to new location. Send no further mail or communication. Will inform you of new address when relocated.
SIX Will contact you as soon as possible.
SEVEN Please reply by Amateur Radio through the amateur delivering this message. This is a free public service.
EIGHT Need additional _____ mobile or portable equipment for immediate emergency use.
NINE Additional _____ radio operators needed to assist with emergency at this location.
TEN Please contact _____. Advise to standby and provide further emergency information, instructions or assistance.
ELEVEN Establish Amateur Radio emergency communications with _____ on _____ MHz.
TWELVE Anxious to hear from you. No word in some time. Please contact me as soon as possible.
THIRTEEN Medical emergency situation exists here.
FOURTEEN Situation here becoming critical. Losses and damage from _____ increasing.
FIFTEEN Please advise your condition and what help is needed.
SIXTEEN Property damage very severe in this area.
SEVENTEEN REACT communications services also available. Establish REACT communications with _____ on channel _____.
EIGHTEEN Please contact me as soon as possible at _____.
NINETEEN Request health and welfare report on _____. (State name, address and telephone number.)
TWENTY Temporarily stranded. Will need some assistance. Please contact me at _____.
TWENTY ONE Search and Rescue assistance is needed by local authorities here. Advise availability.
TWENTY TWO Need accurate information on the extent and type of conditions now existing at your location. Please furnish this information and reply without delay.
TWENTY THREE Report at once the accessibility and best way to reach your location.

TWENTY FOUR Evacuation of residents from this area urgently needed. Advise plans for help.

TWENTY FIVE Furnish as soon as possible the weather conditions at your location.

TWENTY SIX Help and care for evacuation of sick and injured from this location needed at once.

Emergency/priority messages originating from official sources, must carry the signature of the originating official.

Group Two -- Routine messages

FORTY SIX Greetings on your birthday and best wishes for many more to come.

FIFTY Greetings by Amateur Radio.

FIFTY ONE Greetings by Amateur Radio. This message is sent as a free public service by ham radio operators here at _____. Am having a wonderful time.

FIFTY TWO Really enjoyed being with you. Looking forward to getting together again.

FIFTY THREE Received your _____. It's appreciated; many thanks.

FIFTY FOUR Many thanks for your good wishes.

FIFTY FIVE Good news is always welcome. Very delighted to hear about yours.

FIFTY SIX Congratulations on your _____, a most worthy and deserved achievement.

FIFTY SEVEN Wish we could be together.

FIFTY EIGHT Have a wonderful time. Let us know when you return.

FIFTY NINE Congratulations on the new arrival. Hope mother and child are well.

***SIXTY** Wishing you the best of everything on _____.
SIXTY ONE Wishing you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

***SIXTY TWO** Greetings and best wishes to you for a pleasant _____ holiday season.

SIXTY THREE Victory or defeat, our best wishes are with you. Hope you win.

SIXTY FOUR Arrived safely at _____.
SIXTY FIVE Arriving _____ on _____. Please arrange to meet me there.

SIXTY SIX DX QSLs are on hand for you at the _____ QSL Bureau. Send _____ self addressed envelopes.

SIXTY SEVEN Your message number _____ undeliverable because of _____. Please advise.

SIXTY EIGHT Sorry to hear you are ill. Best wishes for a speedy recovery.

*Can be used for all holidays.

ARRL NUMBERS SHOULD BE SPELLED OUT AT ALL TIMES.

AMATEUR RADIO DISASTER WELFARE MESSAGE

NR	PRECEDENCE	HX	STATION	CHECK	PLACE OF ORIGIN	TIME	DATE
	W			ARL			

TO: _____ TELEPHONE _____

STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____

(PLEASE CHECK NOT MORE THAN TWO STANDARD TEXTS FROM LIST BELOW)

- _____ **ONE** Everyone safe here. Please don't worry.
 _____ **TWO** Coming home as soon as possible.
 _____ **THREE** Am in _____ hospital. Receiving excellent care and recovering fine.
 _____ **FOUR** Only slight property damage here. Do not be concerned about disaster reports.
 _____ **FIVE** Am moving to new location. Send no further mail or communication. Will inform you of new address when relocated.
 _____ **SIX** Will contact you as soon as possible.
 _____ **SIXTY FOUR** Arrived safely at _____.

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____ TELEPHONE _____

Please Note: Messages should have delivery telephone numbers. Delivery of messages requiring postage or telephone toll charges is optional with the delivering station.

MESSAGE ACCEPTED AT	SENT TO	TIME	DATE	OPERATOR	CALLSIGN

ARRL RECOMMENDED PRECEDENCES

Please observe the following ARRL provisions for PRECEDENCES in connection with written message traffic. These provisions are designed to increase the efficiency of our service both in normal times and in emergency.

Precedences

EMERGENCY Any message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials or instructions vital to relief of stricken populace in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be very rare. On CW/RTTY, this designation will always be spelled out. When in doubt, do not use it.

PRIORITY Use abbreviation *P* on CW/RTTY. This classification is for a) important messages having a specific time limit b) official messages not covered in the emergency category c) press dispatches and emergency-related traffic not of the utmost urgency d) notice of death or injury in a disaster area, personal or official.

WELFARE This classification, abbreviated as *W* on CW/RTTY, refers to either an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area or an advisory from the disaster area that indicates all is well. Welfare traffic is handled only after all emergency and priority traffic is cleared. The Red Cross equivalent to an incoming Welfare message is DWI (Disaster Welfare Inquiry).

ROUTINE Most traffic in normal times will bear this designation. In disaster situations, traffic labeled *R* on CW/RTTY should be handled last, or not at all when circuits are busy with higher precedence traffic.

American Scene

In the Caribbean: Hams and Goats

The only possible landing at the island is not a landing in the usual sense of the word but a place where a boat can be held long enough for men to jump on a wire rope ladder that dangles about 40 ft. from a cantilever catwalk. There is constant danger of the boat being broached by the incoming swell, being smashed against the cliff, being caught and crushed under the cliff or being engulfed by the receding backwash.

—U.S. Coast Guard Warning

That hint of danger had not dissuaded the nine Americans, most of them normally sedentary landlubbers, from boarding the sturdy 48-ft. fishing trawler *Gabriella* in Kingston, Jamaica, and heading into the windswept Caribbean on a stomach-churning 124-mile, 15-hour voyage to U.S.-owned Navassa Island, 30 miles west of Haiti. Unaccountably cheerful through the stormy night, the five-man Jamaican crew and the boat's Kingston owner, Gilbert Thompson ("I couldn't trust the responsibility of this trip to just the crew"), kept the craft on course toward its tiny target: a flat-topped limestone rock merely one mile wide and two miles long, with sheer cliffs plunging to the sea. And as the deck of the *Gabriella* heaved in the 10-ft. waves, so too did many of the Americans.

Why were they spending precious vacation time to live for a week on a hot, deserted pile of boulders and brush? All were amateur radio operators, and each was pursuing the arcane joys of one of that burgeoning hobby's most popular specialties. It is called DXing, meaning long-distance communications. The obsessive goal of diehard DXers is to make at least one contact with each of the 318 "countries" recognized by hams around the world. Under criteria established by the American Radio Relay League, the largest ham organization, Navassa qualifies as one such country because it is more than 225 miles from its governing mainland. But no ham can talk to Navassa unless other amateurs go there to put it on the air. That was the aim of this "DXpedition."

Approaching the island after dawn, the intrepid hams quickly discovered that the Coast Guard's warning had been apt. The wire ladder was there, all right, but the backwash was violent. Transporting gear, including 50 boxes of electronic equipment, three rotatable-beam antennas, two gasoline-powered generators weighing about 150 lbs. each, plus assorted 20-ft.-long steel pipes, bamboo poles, 250-lb. gasoline drums, kegs of drinking water and a week's food supply, looked impossible. Just getting to the

swaying ladder seemed daunting enough.

But the expedition's gruff leader was unfazed. John Ackley (call sign: KP2A) had made a fortune by selling his New Jersey computer firm in 1976, then founded the tax-exempt International DX Foundation to promote worldwide good will by sponsoring such DXpeditions. His foundation had supplied all of the radio gear, while the trip's cost (more than \$10,000) was split among the nine operators. Ackley set off with two crewmen in a 12-ft. dinghy, powered by a 25-h.p. outboard motor. One crewman skillfully maneuvered the tiny craft through the heavy seas to put Ackley at the ladder on the crest of a wave. He scrambled up the

16 suspended steps—and the ladder held.

For the next eight hours, the precarious unloading of the *Gabriella* by slow trips in the pitching dinghy continued, with one wholly unexpected assist. As the hams began setting up the first of four operating sites on a plateau some 100 ft. above the water (but 200 ft. beneath the island's flat top), they heard a warning horn blast from the *Gabriella*, then a shout on the short-range radio: "Two men are climbing the ladder."

Two frail-looking wooden fishing boats had rounded a rocky point, and their seven occupants were coming ashore. Were they Haitians determined to assert their nation's unsupported 124-year-old claim to the island? Perhaps an advance party of pirates known to seize foreign small craft in the area? No. They pointed to the gear, then to the block and tackle hoisting it and finally to themselves. Stu Greene (WA2MOE), a lawyer

from Peekskill, N.Y., managed to bargain in fractured French. The visitors were from Haiti and would help unload the boat for \$20. The tenderfoot hams were amazed at how their helpers could toss a 75-lb. equipment box on one shoulder and stride barefoot over the sharp rocks to help set up the stations.

By nightfall the hams were on the air, and the strange ritual of DXing began. "This is KP2A-portable KP1," one of the operators said quietly into a microphone. That call signaled the DXpedition's presence on Navassa. Almost immediately occurred what hams call a pile-up. The whole ham world, it seemed, was shouting at Navassa on the same frequency, each

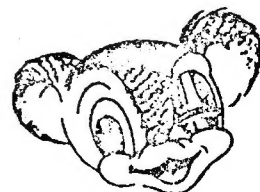
foreign operator yelling his call letters phonetically. Apart from the roar of the numerous U.S. hams, the voices of Japanese amateurs were particularly prevalent, mingling in a hummingbird cacophony strange to the Western ear.

Each contact lasted fewer than ten seconds. Each was then logged by the hams on Navassa; when they returned to the mainland, they would send a QST ("I acknowledge your transmission") card to each operator confirming the contact. The goal is to collect as many of these cards as possible. Some 200 enthusiasts have cards from all 318 "countries."

For six days, 24 hours a day, the rapid-fire transmissions continued. The island's plentiful goats, graceful V-winged birds and night-prowling rats must have been startled by the strange sounds breaking their normal silence: generators that putt-putted like suburban lawnmowers; American voices repeating over and over,

"Quick As A Wink" Printing & Sales Co.

573 Union Street West Springfield, Ma. 01089



American Scene

"You are five-nine on Navassa"; the clean, clear whistle of skilled code operators giving similar signal reports to the multitude of distant stations. The men worked in shifts up to six hours long, hunched over logs, struggling to get each plaintive call down accurately.

There were moments of giddy camaraderie in the island's intense heat. When the Jamaican crew captured a goat, Ackley stuck a microphone in its face and elicited an obliging *baaa*. A ham in England laughed back.

By week's end 33,552 hams from as far as Australia and from as unlikely a place as Tristan da Cunha, a South Atlantic island, had radioed Navassa. The repeated shouts of "Thanks for the new country" were satisfying. But each operator had a more personal reason for coming to that Godforsaken rock. "It's the only adventure left to me in this hobby," explained Bob Schenck (N200), a telephone-switching specialist from Tucker, N.J. Two years ago, Schenck and Ackley went on a DXpedition to Spratly

Island, in the South China Sea, and got more adventure than they sought. Their boat was fired on by Vietnamese artillery. "It's an ego thing—a whole lot of people get to know your call," said Jim Dionne (K1MEM), a computer expert from Westwood, Mass. "My life was in a rut," added Terry Baxter (N6CW), an avionics technician from La Mesa, Calif., who has made contact with all but two of the countries. "I told my wife, this is something I've got to do."

The most savvy operator on Navassa was Bob Denniston, 63. A former president of national and international ham organizations, he owns a small hotel on Tortola in the British Virgin Islands and a home in Iowa, and has apt call letters, W0DX. A bearded gent in a pith helmet, Denniston organized two DXpeditions to Clipperton Island, a forbidding rock in the Pacific, 1,800 miles west of the Panama Canal, putting it on the air for the first time in 1954. He went twice in the 1960s to Malpelo Island, 310 miles west of Colombia, initiating the first ham operations there. The mountainside radio sites on Malpelo were pitched at a 45° angle,

and one ham survived a fall into the sea only because his life jacket kept his unconscious body afloat. To Denniston, there is nothing like taking charge of a frequency and controlling all those frantic callers. "I love working a pile-up," he says.

Throughout the hams' stay on Navassa, the sea remained surprisingly calm. But when they broke camp and boarded the *Gabriella* once again, the winds howled anew and stomachs turned queasy. "I keep asking myself, why do I do this?" muttered Al Fischer (K8CW) of Mansfield, Ohio. But for the one novice DXer aboard, the trip proved fatal. The goat whose *baaa* was heard round the world was served up as mutton stew.

—By Ed Magnuson (W2UB)

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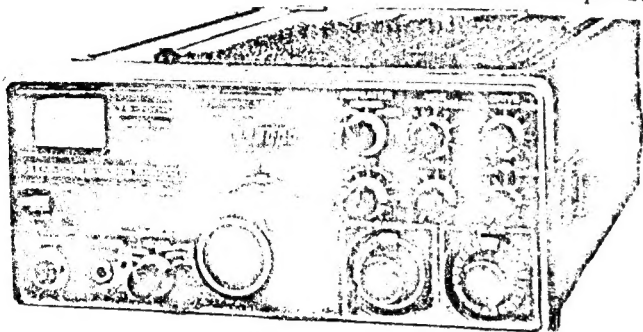
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